



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

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For Immediate Release

August 21, 2012

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STATE REPORTS FIRST HUMAN WEST NILE VIRUS CASE THIS YEAR

Number of Dead Birds Found with the Virus Increases

MADISON – State and local health officials have confirmed the season's first reported case of human West Nile virus (WNV) infection. The illness occurred in a Dodge County resident who was hospitalized and released. During 2011, three Wisconsin residents developed symptomatic WNV infection.

Officials also confirmed that 18 dead birds tested positive for WNV. The birds were found in 10 counties: Barron, Brown, Kenosha, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Oneida, Portage, Rock, Sheboygan and Winnebago. This is the first such activity reported in these counties this year. In July, WNV was detected in three dead birds collected in Dane, Pierce, and Washington counties. The state now has a total of 21 dead birds from 13 counties testing positive for WNV. Infected birds serve as an early warning by indicating that WNV is present in an area and residents should be particularly careful to protect themselves against mosquito bites.

The likelihood of contracting WNV infection is low and most people infected with the virus will not have symptoms. Those who do become ill may develop a fever, headache, rash, muscle and joint aches, nausea, vomiting and fatigue that can last a few days. Symptoms may begin 3 to 15 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. In rare cases, WNV can cause severe disease including encephalitis and meningitis. Severe symptoms include high fever, muscle weakness, stiff neck, disorientation, mental confusion, tremors, convulsions, paralysis and coma. Older adults and people with compromised immune systems are at an increased risk of severe disease caused by the virus.

There is no specific treatment for WNV infection other than to treat symptoms. If you think you have WNV infection, contact your healthcare provider.

WNV is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito and is not transmitted person to person. Although few mosquitoes actually carry the virus, it is important to take steps to minimize your exposure during mosquito season:

- Limit time spent outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Apply insect repellent to clothing as well as exposed skin because mosquitoes may bite through clothing.
- Make sure window and door screens are in good repair to prevent mosquito entry.

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- Properly dispose of items that hold water, such as tin cans, plastic containers, ceramic pots or discarded tires to prevent mosquito breeding. Turn over wheelbarrows, wading pools, boats and canoes when not in use.
- Clean roof gutters and downspouts for proper drainage.
- Change the water in birdbaths and pet dishes at least every three days.
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas, and hot tubs; drain water from pool covers. Trim tall grass, weeds and vines because mosquitoes use these areas to rest during hot daylight hours.
- Landscape to prevent water from pooling in low-lying areas.

The Department of Health Services and the Dodge County Human Services and Health Department – Public Health Unit will continue surveillance activities for West Nile virus until October. As part of the surveillance effort, residents are encouraged to report sick or dead crows, blue jays and ravens to the Dead Bird Hotline at 1-800-433-1610.

For more information regarding West Nile virus in Wisconsin, visit:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/ArboviralDiseases/WestNileVirus/Index.htm>

For WNV information in Dodge County, call Dodge County Human Services and Health Department – Public Health Unit at (920) 386-3670.

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